

VZCZCXYZ0007
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHFN #0391/01 1721412
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 211412Z JUN 07
FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1165

UNCLAS FREETOWN 000391

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR OIIP, AF/PD-LBEDICHEK AND J.SCHAMING-ROANAN
DEPT ALSO FOR IIP/G/AF, AF/W/SL-AEOKEDIGI

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [SL](#)
SUBJECT: MEDIA PLACEMENTS FOR MAY 2007

1. Post and Mission Activities/Press Releases:

1A. On May 4, PEN Sierra Leone, a literary club, in collaboration with the United States Embassy in Freetown, celebrated the 37th anniversary of Earth day with an essay competition. In a prize ceremony at the Embassy, the Ambassador said the celebrations were to raise environmental awareness among Sierra Leoneans. The local press reported as follows: "Sierra Leone PEN, U.S. Embassy celebrate Earth Day" AWOKO 5/7
"U.S. Ambassador impressed with young pupils"
THE EXCLUSIVE 5/7

1B. The Ambassador expressed satisfaction for President Kabbah, the Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs, and the Parliamentary Committee Chairman on Human Rights having provided critical support for the Trafficking in Person Legislation Act that passed in 2005. "Sierra Leone has done well, but Sierra Leone must continue to do better," he said at a conference. He said the U.S. and other donors would continue to support efforts to overcome the scourges of trafficking in person and exploitation of child labor.

The local press reported as follows:
"U.S. Ambassador commends Kabbah" THE SPARK 5/29

1C. President Bush has announced the nomination of Ambassador June Carter Perry, currently in Lesotho, to replace Ambassador Hull who will become a professor. Ambassador Perry's biographic background provided.

The local press reported as follows:
"George Bush replaces Ambassador Hull," CONCORD TIMES 5/2
"President Bush Names New Envoy to Sierra Leone," INDEPENDENT OBSERVER 5/2; UNITY 5/3; AWARENESSTIMES 5/3
"New US Envoy to Sierra Leone named," AWOKO 5/2

1D. The American Envoy will visit the District Prison of Moyamba on May 2, 2007. The envoy's visit may be connected to the pivotal role the prison plays in prison reform throughout the country.

"US Ambassador to visit Moyamba Prison," THE SPECTATOR, 5/2

2. KEY MEDIA STORIES

1A. The National Electoral Commission (NEC) circulated a new proposed timetable for the presidential and parliamentary elections, suggesting a new elections date of August 11, 2007. The change of date from July 28 is due to the constitutionally stipulated number of days required between the closure of Parliament (now on June 25) and Election Day.

The local press reported s follows:
"New Date for 2007 Elections" NEW CITIZEN 5/7
"Thorpe Proposes New Election Date" AWOKO 5/7

¶B. The Acting Director of National AIDS Secretariat in Freetown says according to the 2006 UNAIDS report some 5,200 Sierra Leonean children are living with HIV/AIDS in the country. Dr. Kargbo said out of the 5,200 children living with the virus only 52 have been identified and only 13 are now on anti-retroviral drugs. He said government has opened about 90 Prevention of Mother to Child transmission Centers (PMTCT) all over the country.

The local press reported as follows:
"5,200 Children Infected with HIV," 5/9

¶C. 46 chiefdoms out of 91 where the Arms for Development Project operates have been verified and certified arms-free by the Sierra Leone Police. The Officer Commanding (Fire Arms Dept) at Police Headquarters said some 9,541 ammunition were collected from the people in 91 chiefdoms where they have been operating.

The local press reported as follows:
"9,541 weapons collected in 46 chiefdoms" NEW VISION 5/10

¶D. A Sierra Leonean, Jacob Conteh, wrote of his experiences in living in the United States. He said "Today, there is still a distorted picture of America all over the world, especially in Africa. Many feel that once they make it to America, they will strike gold and become rich ... America definitely offers immense opportunities ... But those opportunities come with a huge price ... In my case I had to start as a cook, do many odd jobs, go to graduate school, and climb through the ladder slowly before landing a decent paying job." He further advised, "Perhaps before coming to America, one should thoroughly examine the conditions here (USA). If your aim of coming to America is to come here and make quick money and return home to live happily after, then you have the wrong motive." Conteh is now a Senior Editor living in Alexandria, Virginia.

The local press reported as follows:
"Coming to America - Op Ed" CONCORD TIMES 5/14

HULL